

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for storing electronic documents comprising the steps of:

associating an associative object with at least one electronic document, wherein the associative object uniquely corresponds to an image of a seal, stamp, or tape that is visually displayable within a user interface;

displaying ~~[[an]]~~ said image within ~~[[a]]~~ said user interface, ~~wherein the image is a user-selectable representation for said associative object;~~

moving the displayed image within the user interface as said associative object is associated with said at least one electronic document so as to visually simulate said image being affixed to said at least one electronic document;

generating an audio simulation of said displayed image being affixed to the at least one electronic document when the displayed image is moved adjacent to or over another image within the user interface representative of the at least one electronic document;

storing at least one metadata attribute as a characteristic related to said associative object; and

modifying a storage characteristic of said at least one electronic document based on one of said metadata attributes.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said associative object is a digital seal.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
presenting at least one multimedia object within said user interface, wherein said multimedia object is a user selectable representation for said associative object.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, said modifying step further comprising the step of:
requiring an authorization code previously specified within one of said metadata attributes before allowing said at least one electronic document to be retrieved.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said authorization code is valid for a first user and wherein said authorization code is invalid for a second user.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
associating a second associative object with one of said at least one electronic document.
7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said associative object includes an authorization code, and wherein said second associative object includes a second authorization code, said method further comprising the step of:
requiring said first authorization code and said second authorization code before said one of at least one electronic document can be retrieved.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
establishing a first authorization code for said associative object, wherein said first authorization code is associated with a first image;
encoding said at least one associated electronic documents with a second authorization code associated with a second image; and,

decoding said at least one associated electronic documents using at least in part said first image.

9. – 21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A machine readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

associating an associative object with at least one electronic document, wherein the associative object uniquely corresponds to an image of a seal, stamp, or tape that is visually displayable within a user interface;

displaying ~~[[an]]~~ said image within ~~[[a]]~~ said user interface, ~~wherein the image is a user selectable representation for said associative object;~~

moving the displayed image within the user interface as said associative object is associated with said at least one electronic document so as to visually simulate said image being affixed to said at least one electronic document;

generating an audio simulation of said displayed image being affixed to the at least one electronic document when the displayed image is moved adjacent to or over another image within the user interface representative of the at least one electronic document;

storing at least one metadata attribute as a characteristic related to said associative object; and

modifying a storage characteristic of said at least one electronic document based on one of said metadata attributes.

23. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 22, wherein said associative object is a digital seal.

24. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 22, further comprising the step of:

presenting at least one multimedia object within said user interface, wherein said multimedia object is a user selectable representation for said associative object.

25. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 22, said modifying step further comprising the step of:

requiring an authorization code previously specified within one of said metadata attributes before allowing said at least one electronic document to be retrieved.

26. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 25, wherein said authorization code is valid for a first user and wherein said authorization code is invalid for a second user.

27. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 22, further comprising the step of:

associating a second associative object with one of said at least one electronic document.

28. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 27, wherein said associative object includes an authorization code, and wherein said second associative object includes a second authorization code, said machine readable storage further comprising the step of:

requiring said first authorization code and said second authorization code before said one of at least one electronic document can be retrieved.

29. (Original) The machine readable storage of claim 22, further comprising the steps of:

establishing a first authorization code for said associative object, wherein said first authorization code is associated with a first image;

encoding said at least one associated electronic documents with a second authorization code associated with a second image; and,

decoding said at least one associated electronic documents using at least in part said first image.

30. – 42. (Cancelled)

43. (New) A method for storing electronic documents comprising the steps of:

visually presenting a plurality of images within a user interface, each image uniquely corresponding to one of a plurality of associative objects;

associating with each of a plurality of electronic documents at least one of the associative objects, wherein the associating comprises moving at least one corresponding image to at least one electronic document within the user interface to simulate affixing the at least one corresponding image to the at least one electronic document;

storing at least one metadata attribute as a characteristic related to the associative object;

modifying a storage characteristic of the at least one electronic document based on one of the metadata attributes; and

opening at least one of the plurality of electronic documents by moving within the user interface a first one of the images adjacent to one side of a visual symbol representing a logical operator and moving a second one of the images adjacent to another side of the visual symbol.